receive a subject facial image;

determine statistical property measurements for respective pixels in at least one block of the subject facial image;

convert the statistical property measurements into a feature vector; and

identifying, by a processor, at least one characteristic of the subject facial image by utilizing the feature vector.

45. An apparatus of claim **44** wherein the at least one characteristic comprises at least one of age, gender, or expression.

46. An apparatus of claim **44** wherein the characteristic is the identity of the subject facial image, and the identifying comprises identifying an enrolled facial image that resembles the subject facial image by comparing the feature vector to a plurality of enrolled feature vectors.

47. An apparatus of claim **44** wherein the at least one memory and the computer program code are further configured to, with the processor, cause the apparatus to:

compress the feature vector by applying a dimension compression matrix; and

compress the enrolled feature vectors by applying the dimension compression matrix.

48. An apparatus of claim **44** wherein the at least one memory and the computer program code are further configured to, with the processor, cause the apparatus to create at least one histogram of bins, wherein a bin is associated with a unique statistical property value and a bin frequency represents a number of pixels in the at least one block measuring at the unique statistical property value.

49. An apparatus of claim **48** wherein the at least one memory and the computer program code are further configured to, with the processor, cause the apparatus to convert a plurality of histograms, each representing a block of the subject facial image, into a plurality of vectors and subsequently converting the plurality of vectors into the feature vector.

50. An apparatus of claim **44** wherein the at least one memory and the computer program code are further configured to, with the processor, cause the apparatus to:

receive a training group of facial images;

apply block division to the training group;

classify images in the training group following application of block division;

utilize results of the classification to determine a learned dimension compression matrix;

receive an evaluation group of facial images;

apply the block division to the evaluation group;

apply the learned dimension compression matrix to the evaluation group following application of the block division; and

evaluate the block division based on the results of the applying the learned dimension compression to the evaluation group.

51. An apparatus of claim **44** wherein the at least one memory and the computer program code are further configured to, with the processor, cause the apparatus to:

identify a plurality of blocks of a facial image in which at least one block overlaps another block.

52. An apparatus of claim **44** wherein the at least one memory and the computer program code are further configured to, with the processor, cause the apparatus to:

assign a block of the facial image a weight; and

incorporate the weight into the feature vector.

53. An apparatus of claim **52** wherein the at least one memory and the computer program code are further configured to, with the processor, cause the apparatus to:

receive a training group of facial images;

analyze changes in a classification error rate throughout classification iterations with variable block weights; and

determine an ideal weight by analyzing a block's impact on the classification error rate.

54. An apparatus of claim **44** wherein the at least one memory and the computer program code are further configured to, with the processor, cause the apparatus to:

identify a plurality of key points of the facial image;

measure distances from a pixel to a plurality of key points; and

encompass the pixel and a closest key point in a block.

55. An apparatus of claim **44** wherein the at least one memory and the computer program code are further configured to, with the processor, cause the apparatus to:

assign a weight to a facial feature point of the facial image; and

utilize the weight in normalizing the facial image.

56. A computer program product comprising at least one non-transitory computer-readable storage medium having computer-executable program code instructions stored therein, the computer-executable program code instructions comprising program code instructions to:

receive a subject facial image;

determine statistical property measurements for respective pixels in at least one block of the subject facial image;

convert the statistical property measurements into a feature vector; and

identify at least one characteristic of the subject facial image by utilizing the feature vector.

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